
DE News



March 23, 2001 - Iowa Department of Education - Ted Stilwill, Director

From the Director's desk:

A status report on teacher quality legislation and the budget

If you've been keeping track of the teacher quality legislation, you know there are now several bills that have been introduced in each chamber. We are keeping track of all the proposals and the Governor has personally convened a bipartisan group to reach consensus on the best approach to meet the needs of students and teachers. For a recap on the major points in each bill and a side-by-side comparison, go to our Web site at www.state.ia.us/educate/ and click on Teacher Quality.

Teacher quality funding overview

The various bills differ somewhat in how they would spend the \$40 million set aside for implementing the first year of the teacher quality proposals. In general, the \$40 million will pay for:

- National board certification;
- An induction/mentoring program, including training and paying mentors;
- Variable pay (although the Republican version sets aside more money for this purpose);
- An evaluation program, including training for evaluators;
- Increasing beginning teacher salaries toward a new minimum; and
- Increasing career teacher salaries toward a new minimum.

Of the \$40 million, between \$27 million and \$31 million would be used specifically to increase salaries.

Districts will receive their salary allocations according to a formula, which is based 50% on certified enrollment and 50% on number of teachers.

Please note that all participating districts will receive their allocation – even those that currently pay teachers more than the new minimums. Those districts would simply distribute their allocation differently among teachers (although at this point we don't know if that will be guided by law, rule or district policy).

Visit the DE Web site at www.state.ia.us/educate/ and click on the Teacher Compensation Proposals headline to get a complete listing of proposed allocations per district.

Other legislation of interest

HF 576, which provides for certain school finance issues, including a 101% guarantee of the previous year's regular program district cost, reorganization incentives, and student weighting at regional academies. In Ways & Means subcommittee.

SF 203, budget guarantee for FY02 and FY03. Passed Senate; in House Education subcommittee.

SF 348 (formerly SSB 1086), establishing charter schools. Approved by committee.

SF 197, extending the community college vocational-technical technology improvement program and appropriation (currently set to

expire at the end of this fiscal year). Senate Appropriations subcommittee.

HF 674 (formerly HSB 218), establishing a process for voluntary AEA reorganization. On House calendar.

HF 670 (formerly HSB 236), allowing alternative licensure for K-12 administrators and teachers. On House calendar.

SF 310 (as amended by committee), requiring the Department to study elimination of community college licensure, including related issues of tenure. On Senate calendar.

SF 357, allowing schools to seek SBRC approval to use their unspent balance to pay for increased utility costs. On Senate calendar.

HF 660 (formerly HF 197), increasing the state sales and use tax by one cent, with the proceeds going to school infrastructure and property tax relief. On House calendar.

Budget talks continue

Much of our work this week was dedicated to helping the Governor's office develop revised budget recommendations. Although the Governor has said K-12 students will receive full state aid, we still expect budget reductions in other education appropriations. The revised budget deadline is next Wednesday, so we'll know more then.

Census update

New national census data shows that K-12 students across the country are more racially and ethnically diverse, and that same trend is true in Iowa.

Total minority enrollment in Iowa public schools has more than doubled since the 1985-86 school year to nearly 46,000 students in 1999-2000. In the 1999-2000 school year, 3.8% of Iowa students were African American (up 5.4% from the prior year), 3.2% were Hispanic, (up 12.6%), 1.7% were Asian (up 1.2%), and .5% were American

Indian. All categories have increased significantly since the 1985-86 school year, with Hispanic enrollment seeing the biggest gain at 289.2% (15,836 students compared to 4,069).

State enrollment in number of students, however, do not mirror gains at the national level, pointing to the fact that we need to attract more families to Iowa.

Last year, our enrollment declined to 498,556 students compared to 502,534 in the 1998-99 school year. Our projected enrollment this year is 497,887, and is expected to be down to 488,584 by the 2004-05 school year.

For complete enrollment information, see our Condition of Education report on the Web at www.state.ia.us/educate/.

Visit the DE on the Web

For more information about the Iowa Department of Education, grants, policies, programs, or links to other education web sites, visit the DE home page: www.state.ia.us/educate/.